

VZCZCXRO2799

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RUEHLZ RUEHNP RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSK RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHSI #2313 3451425
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 101425Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY TBILISI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0555
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS TBILISI 002313

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KHIV](#) [SOCI](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGIA: GEORGIA MARKS WORLD AIDS DAY WITH EVENTS
IN BATUMI

¶1. (U) Summary: USAID funded STI/HIV Prevention Project (SHIP), in partnership with the Department of Social Public Health of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, organized a well-received public awareness campaign and series of events in Batumi on December 1 to mark World AIDS Day. The Minister of Health and Social Affairs and the Minister of Education, Culture and Sport of Adjara attended the events, along with 600 high school students. Events included the distribution of informational leaflets, the premier of the documentary video "The Wall," dramatic performances and a quiz competition. End Summary.

WORLD AIDS DAY

¶2. (U) The highlight of the day was a quiz competition on HIV/AIDS issues, hosted by a popular local disc jockey. Students from three schools competed for prizes in the game. Dramatic performances were put on by the students as well. A documentary on HIV-associated stigma and discrimination funded by the European Commission, "The Wall," was screened, and volunteers distributed informational and educational materials among the general population during a public mobilization street march.

HIV/AIDS IN GEORGIA

¶3. (U) According to the Georgian Infectious Diseases, HIV/AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research Center, as of November 30, a total of 1,822 HIV cases had been registered in Georgia, 948 patients developed AIDS and 395 patients died. HIV infection has reached all regions of the country, but is concentrated in Tbilisi and the Black Sea coastal regions. Although Georgia is classified as having low HIV prevalence, defined by UNAIDS as having less than 1% infection rate, it is critical that preventative measures be taken in order to prevent the spread of the disease.

LOGSDON